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ABSTRACT

Instructional designers are well equipped to handle the leadership of faculty development in higher education. Faculty development is part of the process of lifelong learning for the college or university instructor and a key component of the transformational changes taking place in higher education. The need for faculty to appropriately integrate technology into their curriculum and utilize innovative instructional methodologies is driven by five factors: students, faculty, administration, society, and technology. The roles of instructional designers and instructional systems design methodologies are critical to the success of faculty development programs and can successfully facilitate the dynamic change process currently underway in colleges and universities. A skilled instructional designer is a professional well-trained in assisting faculty members and serving faculty development programs to better utilize innovative instructional methodologies, strategies, and techniques. The anticipated outcome of the current transformation in higher education is improvement in teaching facilitated by faculty development initiatives under the guidance of the instructional designer. (Contains 14 references.) (Author/AEF)

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Leadership in Higher Education: Instructional Designers in Faculty Development Programs

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Abstract

Instructional designers are well equipped to handle the leadership of faculty development in higher education. Faculty development is part of the process of lifelong learning for the college or university instructor and a key component of the transformational changes taking place in higher education. The need for faculty to appropriately integrate technology into their curriculum and utilize innovative instructional methodologies is driven by five factors: students, faculty, administration, society, and technology. The role of instructional designers and instructional systems design methodologies are critical to the success of faculty development programs and can successfully facilitate the dynamic change process currently underway in colleges and universities.

Faculty development in higher education is a part of the process of lifelong learning for the college or university instructor and a key component of the transformational changes taking place in higher education. Five factors are driving the need for faculty to appropriately integrate technology and instructional systems approaches into the design and development of their courses: students, faculty, administration, society, and technology. A skilled instructional designer is a well-trained professional for assisting faculty members and serving faculty development programs to better utilize innovative instructional methodologies, strategies, and techniques. The anticipated outcome of the current transformation in higher education is improvement in teaching facilitated by faculty development initiatives under the guidance of the instructional designer.

The Transformation of Higher Education

Change is happening within many sectors that have direct influence on colleges and universities and the effects are certain to alter the way in which higher education operates in the future. Managing the transformation is the key to survival for colleges and universities. Understanding the forces of change requires leadership that is skilled in evaluating and synthesizing the inter-relatedness of the variables involved. Technology, as an innovation, consistently creates changes in the way people and organizations function, access information, and communicate. The transformation of higher education can be understood in terms of the forces that are driving the need for faculty development. The changing student character is creating the need for faculty to adopt new teaching strategies. The need of faculty and administration to accomplish their respective functions drives the need for and enables the establishment of faculty development programs. The changes in the demographics, culture, and nature of work in society are reflected in the expectations of graduates. The application of technology to educational objectives creates an evolving, dynamic environment for learning, and subsequently requires an improved, dynamic methodology of teaching. Based on their knowledge of systems theory and change management, instructional designers can serve as change agents within faculty development programs.

Role of Faculty Development in the Transformation of Higher Education

Faculty development is a process of professional training (and retraining) undertaken by instructors in higher education. Like its corporate counterpart, faculty training and development is important for maintaining or improving the quality of services and products offered by the organization. Highly skilled faculty is the core of a top quality academic institution and is the primary producers of critical higher education products: prized research and educated graduates.

A working definition of faculty development will help clarify this topic and show the far-reaching boundaries that support its role as a catalyst for transforming higher education. Faculty in colleges and universities are undertaking fundamental remodeling of their teaching approaches. Duderstadt (1999) believes that faculty in higher education will require new instructional methods, models, and techniques for serving the learning needs of the future generation and that faculty development initiatives are instrumental in guiding the transformation. Typically, the literature addresses faculty development only in terms of integrating technology into the teaching and

learning experience. While technology should play an important role, it remains a mere tool to support fundamentally good educational practice.

Faculty development can also be viewed as a process of careful identification of past teaching successes and the generation of ideas, beliefs, and convictions about teaching and learning. From these beliefs it is then possible to choose among the many new tools, technologies, and instructional strategies available. Faculty development programs are focused on the integration of educational technology tools, such as, the Web, hardware, software, and the appropriate use of audio-visual equipment, into a faculty member's established teaching practices. Instructional strategies and methodologies include the instructional systems theories, models, and strategies for analyzing, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating educational experiences and outcomes.

Faculty development is for the purpose of improving teaching and learning at undergraduate and graduate levels. American colleges and universities have been making numerous efforts to improve teaching and learning on their campuses since the 1980s. As a result, some changes have occurred and the repertoire of teaching practices has expanded, such as greater student involvement through collaborative and cooperative learning; technology-based learning; learning communities to bring faculty and students closer together; and teaching centers to improve practice. Despite the various pedagogical innovations there has not been enough deeper reform. There is little evidence that the changes amount to a real systemic reconsideration of how and why students learn or of how institutions, not just faculty, can revise their approaches to teaching (Lazerson, Wagener, & Shumanis, 2000).

Rationale for Faculty Development

Why is there a need for faculty development? A few reasons for undertaking faculty development initiatives emerged from the literature. The primary reason is to help faculty to move their teaching, research, and service forward, which are the three parts of the higher education mission. The goal of improving skills and techniques is equivalent to innovating, which is required for continuing to meet the needs of the stakeholders in higher education, namely students who enroll for the purpose of learning. In most cases, faculty in higher education are paid for teaching but rewarded for scholarship. Further, most faculty are not trained in instructional design and methodologies, as are graduates of teacher education programs (Noone & Swenson, 2001). They learned how to teach by the example set for them by their instructors and then perhaps modified those practices based on actual classroom experience. As research on effective teaching and learning methodologies moves forward, adoption of the best practices by faculty must move with it. Instructional technology practitioners help the internal processes of faculty development by providing the necessary training and support for both pedagogical and technological issues.

Faculty development initiatives have cross-interaction effects with five key areas of the college and university: student acceptance, administrative policy, faculty adoption, technology integration, and the societal context in which the institution functions. Addressing the needs for faculty development has a significant holistic impact on the institution and can act as an energizing catalyst for the systemic change and transformation of higher education. The instructional designer operating within higher education should develop an understanding of this dynamic interaction for the improvement of faculty development initiatives.

Driving Factor: Students

Today's students are more wired, technologically savvy, and connected than any previous generation their character has been shaped by a fast-food style, digital revolution of media and near instant access to information, has little desire for the traditional modes of teacher-centered classroom instruction. Their desires for technology-enhanced experiences are not limited to personal use. Students' expectations for technology-enhanced, practical, collaborative, real-world learning environments contrast with the majority of faculty who still depend on lectures as their prime teaching method (Hansen & Stephens, 2000; Noone & Swenson, 2001). Students are the consumers of the higher education institution's products. If teachers continue to teach in the same way that they have always taught, they will lose the interest of this digital generation and miss the mark of helping to educate, and thereby transform, today's diverse students. Frand (2000) suggests higher education needs to account for the new attitudes and beliefs of students and transform the educational experience so that it is meaningful to the information-age learner. Given an increasing awareness of duty to undergraduate students, colleges and universities, particularly research universities, are engaging in lively debate on how much attention should be paid to undergraduate education (Kennedy, 1998).

Driving Factor: Faculty

Forces of change are most productive when they originate from within the entity that needs changing. Faculty is a key subset of an institution's administrative body, and may be considered the most significant driving factor affecting faculty development. The opportunity for facilitating the change through faculty development programs is one that faculty have begun to take advantage of, but not in such a manner as to have the intended effect. Lazerson et al. (2000) report "...efforts to improve teaching and learning have been supported only in part by faculty and institutions as a whole, with results that are neither significant nor pervasive." When faculty perceive there is a need to change and they understand the true benefit of change to their professional development, there will be a tremendous shift towards faculty development. According to Brown (2000), the shift is occurring now. Scholars worldwide are creating a storm of educational technology experiments. As they assemble in conferences, hallways, and special panels, they are seeking to engage in the issues and opportunities arising from technology-enhanced learning. Faculty seem to be undertaking fundamental remodeling of their teaching approaches and giving a thoughtful consideration of pedagogy. Even though professional development for faculty is important, it is not enough to ensure support for and adoption of technology for teaching. It is a mistake to frame the issue as one of training faculty, which tends to put the "blame" on faculty members and implies that they are the problem that needs to be fixed. Professional development is the last stage in a broader, holistic change process (Bates, 1999). Given the proper conditions of creative energy and institutional loyalty, the faculty is willing to experiment and to engage actively with the needs of students (Kennedy, 1998). In response, faculty members are asking for help from their administrations and one another.

Driving Factor: Administration

The holistic change process is in large part, the purview of the administration. The administrative function of colleges and universities is a driving force on faculty development by virtue of their responsibility for setting policy, managing financial and capital resources, and ensuring the ongoing vitality of the institution. The administration knows that faculty is the key source of a healthy environment, but they must also take action for altering the current atmosphere to invite change. Transformational change powered by the technological revolution is constrained when mistakenly held within the context of the old organizational structures. This is the "mirage of continuity" that denies the need for reorganization of financial and management systems. Outmoded administrative units falsely believe the historic tradition of knowledge creation and transmission can be transformed by the simple substitution of digital for analog technology. A new conception of the university is needed (Battin & Hawkins, 1998).

Policy should precede and guide action. Kennedy (1998) suggests that in order for the transformation of a college or university to occur, institutions require new methods of making faculty members feel responsible for the institution and for its students. One suggested way is to develop a more centralized sense of direction, while at the same time, maintaining a shared governance structure in which faculty members feel more like stakeholders. To help this process, institutions must be more flexible and responsive to new needs, trends, and opportunities, by setting aside funds for new initiatives and perhaps most importantly, by cultivating the spirit of innovation.

Action follows and supports policy. The adoption of academic technologies is a strategic imperative for higher education. The first step in the process of reinventing instructional technology is to convert it into a strategic tool tightly incorporated in well-defined and well-researched institutional objectives. Most every college and university mission statement lists "quality teaching and learning" as one of its key strategic objectives, but have not adequately defined the meaning of "quality learning" with respect to new workplace skills and individual student needs or associated the criteria to particular instructional technology strategies that can be used to achieve them (Privateer, 1999).

Driving Factor: Society

Faculty development, as the primary catalyst for change in two core areas of the university—teaching and learning—is positioned to lead the transformation of the university to meet the needs of the 21st century society dominated by electronic technology (Battin & Hawkins, 1998). Society provides the context in which higher education institutions exist and ultimately serves. The relationship is symbiotic—society produces the students who matriculate and then graduate with some increased capacity to productively serve society. Kennedy (1998) observes that society is paying attention to higher education as evident by media reports of academic scandal, research misconduct, and athletic scholarship violations, as well as more thoughtful and private criticism of employers, government leaders, and parents. It can be said that some attention, even negative, is a sign that Americans care about colleges and universities.

Society perceives higher education as the archivists of cultural heritage and conservators of its history for the purpose of passing both on to subsequent generations of students. It is in the best interest of society that colleges and universities are effectively fulfilling these responsibilities (Kennedy, 1998). These expectations of a changing society on higher education have implications for how teaching and learning is carried out. Employers are a primary stakeholder in society and are looking for graduates who are problem-solvers, which require higher order thinking skills and good collaboration skills. In addition, the changing nature of society—characterized by eras of economic shifts from industrial to information to knowledge—places pressure on colleges and universities to improve the information intelligence of its graduates. The establishment of information science departments within universities in recent years evidences this trend. Faculty will require new skills for delivering, monitoring, and assessing the types of instruction that encourage the maturation of higher cognitive functions and better collaboration skills in students.

Driving Factor: Technology

Technology advancements both drive and support faculty development initiatives. Technology is in constant change. Each advancement or application to education opens new possibilities for its adoption and diffusion in the teaching and learning enterprise. Faculty should seek professional development to better understand and possibly integrate technology into their practice. Like a high-speed train, technology is a rapid transportation vehicle to new levels of learner knowledge construction. Faculty must choose to ride the train, step off, or at least, move out of the way. Given the risk and potential reward of integrating technology into an existing academic paradigm, much more time and research will be needed before a set of "best practices" for the use of new technologies in higher education can be determined. Meanwhile, change is happening at a rate not seen in higher education for a long time. In most colleges and universities, innovation has historically been descriptive of research and scholarship, not teaching methods. The new digital technologies now make bold and creative educational experimentation possible (Farrington, 1999). With each new telecommunication innovation, the basic nature of learning and teaching is changing and creating new ways to process and disseminate information. Instructional technology leaders must be a part of the decision making process when telecommunications and computing technologies are determined (Withrow, 1994).

The Role of Instructional Technology and Instructional Designers

By its innovative nature, instructional technology creates a dynamic for change wherever it is properly used. In particular, computer and telecommunication technologies forces institutions and individuals to adapt to the revolutionary ways in which data and information are stored, retrieved, and communicated. The traditional tasks of editorial criticism and evaluation of course assignments can now take place electronically and, in the best circumstances, link professor and students more closely for more of the work than ever before. Instructional technology facilitates the effective design process of innovative learning environments through the use of efficient systematic methodologies and strategies.

It is a positive note for the instructional technology field that instructional designers are increasingly appearing on the payrolls of universities, namely in faculty development and support programs. Surry (1996) reports that instructional designers are steadily being hired in higher education and in a more recent study, Surry and Robinson (2001) categorized hundreds of educational technology job postings. The instructional design leaders who fill these positions will need to have supplemental skills, such as project management and facilitating change to complement their ISD skills. Their backgrounds and experiences, more than any other professional field, qualify them to handle the dynamic nature of change in educational technology and its application to learning processes and teaching strategies.

As the transformation progresses, faculty will continue to need training and refreshers in the skills that are essential for teaching and learning with technology; support during the development process; and advice for the effective integration of media and information technologies. Instructional technology practitioners need to be prepared for these challenges. Duderstadt (1999) said so well, "The real question is not whether higher education will be transformed but rather *how* and *by whom*." Instructional designers are the professionals prepared to be involved in the transformation and should seek leadership positions in order to positively affect organizational change during the transformation. In addition, it will become incumbent upon them to make contributions to the instructional technology knowledge base regarding research, instruction, process, and outcomes of faculty development initiatives.

Conclusion

To secure future viability and fulfill its tripartite mission of teaching, research, and service, higher education must choose a better strategic path. If they want to reinvent themselves, they have to take a long and hard strategic look into how their delivery of instruction conflicts with the cognitive potentials of contemporary information technologies. Instructional designers are uniquely qualified to take on significant leadership roles within higher education to manage faculty development programs. Faculty development is a component of the process of lifelong learning for professors and educators in higher education and a key component of managing the transformational changes taking place in higher education over the next decade. The key concept of faculty development as a transforming agent of colleges and universities is accepting, understanding, and managing the dynamic changes brought about by the five external and internal factors: students, faculty, administration, society, and technology. These factors drive the need for faculty to integrate technology into their curriculum and utilize new instructional methodologies, strategies, and techniques.

Students' expectations for technology-enhanced, practical, collaborative learning environments contrast with the majority of faculty who still depend on lectures as their prime teaching method (Hansen & Stephens, 2000). If teachers continue to teach in the same way that they have always taught, they will miss the mark of helping to educate (transform) today's diverse students and make the educational experience meaningful to the information-age learner (Frand, 2000).

The opportunity for facilitating the change through faculty development programs is one that faculties have begun to take, but with modest results that are neither significant nor pervasive (Lazerson, et al., 2000). When faculty perceives there is a need to change and they understand the true benefit of change to their professional development, there will be a tremendous shift towards faculty development. Even though professional development for faculty is important, it is not enough to ensure support for and adoption of technology for teaching. A holistic change is needed to support faculty adoption.

The holistic change process is primarily the leadership responsibility of the institution's administration. The administrative function of colleges and universities is a top-down, driving force on faculty development characterized by setting policy, managing financial and capital resources, and ensuring the ongoing vitality of the institution. The administration knows that faculty is the key source of a healthy environment, but they must also recognize the need to alter the current atmosphere to invite change. Transformational change should not be constrained within the context of the old organizational structures. Battin and Hawkins (1998) refer to this as the "mirage of continuity" that denies the need for reorganization of financial and management systems. Historic tradition of knowledge creation and transmission must be replaced with a new conception of the university.

The expectations of a changing society on higher education have implications for how teaching and learning is carried out. Employers are looking for graduates who are problem-solvers, which is challenging to teach in every discipline. Nevertheless, the changing economic nature of society places pressure on colleges and universities to improve the information intelligence of its graduates. Faculty will require new skills for delivering the types of instruction that encourage the maturation of higher cognitive functions and better collaboration skills in students.

Given the risk and potential reward of integrating technology into an existing academic paradigm, more research on the best uses of the new technologies is needed. New digital technologies allow for bold and creative educational experimentation. Instructional technology, by its innovative nature, facilitates change wherever it is appropriately used. To secure future viability and fulfill its mission of teaching, research, and service, higher education must choose a better strategic path. If they want to reinvent themselves, they have to take a long and hard strategic look into how their delivery of instruction conflicts with the cognitive potentials of contemporary information technologies. The key concept of faculty development as a transforming agent of colleges and universities is accepting, understanding, and managing the dynamic changes brought about by the five factors: students, faculty, administration, society, and technology.

The instructional designer is one of the best prepared education professionals to provide training in the skills that are essential for teaching and learning with technology, to provide support during the instructional development process, and to offer pedagogically sound guidance for the effective integration of media and information technologies. Instructional technology practitioners should seek leadership positions in faculty development programs. The result is likely to positively affect implementation of ISD practices, theories, and strategies into faculty development. The instructional designer is a versatile education professional that can offer valuable skills and facilitate appropriate use of instructional systems design for improving teaching and learning methodologies in faculty development programs. In this capacity, instructional designers can play a key leadership role in the transformation of higher education.

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